



Parks & Open Space

5201 St. Vrain Road • Longmont, Colorado 80503
303.678.6200 • Fax: 303.678.6177 • www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org

BOCC PUBLIC MEETING

Time/Date of Meeting: 3:30 p.m., Thursday, March 21, 2019
Location: BOCC Hearing Room, 1325 Pearl Street, 3rd Floor, Boulder, CO

TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Marni Ratzel, Resource Planner II
RE: Eldorado Canyon to Walker Ranch Trail Feasibility Study
DATE: March 14, 2019

Information Item Only

Summary

This item updates the Board of County Commissioners on the status of the partner agency recommendation for a multi-use trail connection between Eldorado Canyon and Walker Ranch. In 2018, the Eldorado Canyon to Walker Ranch Trail Feasibility Study was completed to investigate and analyze trail options for a multi-use connection. The study is a partnership among Boulder County Parks & Open Space (BCPOS), the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP), and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). Two public hearings have been held to consider a partner agency recommendation, one in January by the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) and one in February by the City of Boulder Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT). A subsequent public hearing by the Boulder County Commissioners was anticipated for March. However, in response to public comments and recommendations from the advisory boards, BCPOS plans to postpone the public hearing and decision by the County Commissioners until after the planned visitor management plan for Eldorado Canyon State Park (ECSP) is developed by CPW.

Background Information

For many years, trail planning processes have documented the interest in creating a multi-use link from Eldorado Canyon State Park (ECSP) to Walker Ranch:

- West Trail Study Area (TSA) Plan – OSMP (2011) Attachment A: West TSA Guidance contains additional information
- Eldorado Mountain/Doudy Draw TSA Plan – OSMP (2006)
- OSMP Visitor Master Plan (2005)
- Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan – Trails Map (2001, 2005, 2010, 2015)
- Walker Ranch Management Plan – BCPOS (2013)
- Boulder County Comprehensive Plan – County Trails Map (1999)
- State of Colorado – Colorado the Beautiful Initiative (2016)
- Eldorado Canyon State Park Management Plan – CPW (2000)

More detailed language surrounding plan guidance can be found on pages 2-3 in the [feasibility study](#) posted on the project website. In response to this guidance, BCPOS, OSMP and CPW partnered to complete a feasibility study and planning process to consider opportunities for the multi-use connection.

Feasibility study findings

The feasibility study evaluated two trail options, a North Route and a South Route, and a No Action option using five analysis topics comprised of several criteria in each topic. A summary description of

the findings can be found in the [Summary of Analysis Findings](#) and in the corresponding section of the feasibility report.

The feasibility study provides a technical review of anticipated impacts and demonstrates that a multi-use connection is feasible. The analysis found that while the South Route would have a major impact on environmental and cultural resources, the North Route is anticipated to have significantly fewer impacts. The feasibility study also demonstrates that either route would have major impacts on the state park and the greater Eldorado Springs community. In particular, the introduction of the regional multi-use trail would likely increase traffic, parking demand, and use of the park, as well as raise the potential for conflict between trail users.

2018-19 Process Overview



Summary Feasibility Study Process	
2018	
Aug.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POSAC & OSBT presentations: Update on project and first public engagement period.
Aug. – Sept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Comment Period (Aug. 28 – Sept. 11) • Open House: project timeline, process, route options and analysis topics were evaluated.
Nov. – Dec.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Comment Period (Nov. 28 – Dec. 9) • Open House: feasibility study findings and preliminary partner agency recommendation.
Dec.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POSAC & OSBT presentations: Feasibility study findings and initial feedback on preliminary partner agency recommendation.
2019	
Jan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POSAC public hearing Jan. 24 to consider partner agency recommendation.
Feb.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSBT public hearing Feb. 13 to consider partner agency recommendation.

Partner Agency Recommendation

After careful consideration of the feasibility study findings, the three partner agencies jointly published a preliminary recommendation for a preferred trail alignment along the North Route (using segment N1-N2-N4) in November 2018. The project partners recommended this alternative because it

completes the multi-use trail connection in a way that best balances the conservation values, visitor experience, and sustainable trail best practice opportunities of the area. There also was agreement among the project partners that challenges such as parking capacity, congestion, state park access, and the Eldorado Springs community interface must be addressed as part of future planning, design, and construction phases. The project partners affirmed their joint recommendation of the North Route and finalized a recommendation after consideration of input from community stakeholders in late 2018.

Boulder County Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee Consideration

On Jan. 24, 2019, the Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee hosted a public hearing to consider the partner agency recommendation for a multi-use trail connection between Eldorado Canyon State Park and Walker Ranch. POSAC recommended 5-1-2 (abstentions) to approve:

1. The North Route (using N1, N2, N4) as the preferred alignment for construction of a multi-use trail connection between Eldorado Canyon State Park (ECSP) and Walker Ranch.
2. Continuing to work with OSMP and CPW in collaboration with stakeholders to develop and implement strategies that mitigate capacity-related issues affecting the greater Eldorado Springs community.
3. Ensuring capacity mitigation efforts are identified, funded, and executed, and relevant metrics are met prior to initiating construction of trail.

ACTION: Pedrow moved approval of item. Pasquesi seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES: Pedrow, Anderson, Nibarger, Pasquesi, and Krug. NAYS: Cathy Comstock.

ABSTAIN: Heather Williams, Jenn Archuleta. EXCUSED: Scott Miller

POSAC's action affirmed the partner agency proposal while making important modifications to the #3 component of the recommendation based on public testimony at the meeting. POSAC's amendment supports implementing specific solutions to address parking, access, and public safety issues prior to construction of the multi-use trail. In particular, the modification to #3 was in response to concerns from both the public and POSAC about the impacts of a new trail and user group on visitor capacity issues at the already crowded Eldorado Canyon State Park (ECSP) as well as related effects on the Eldorado Springs community.

POSAC member Comstock shared in a written explanation (of her NAY vote) her concerns for trail impacts to a Habitat Conservation Area and the Eldorado Springs community along with her apprehension over hiker displacement and overcrowding. POSAC members Archuleta and Williams who abstained from voting on the motion, afterward expressed that park congestion and parking problems are larger community issues that extend beyond the purview of the committee. Further, they feel that by requiring capacity issues be addressed prior to trail construction, the momentum for working on those challenging multi-agency concerns will dissolve—and ultimately the trail will not be built. They also noted that the public comment at the meeting was not a reflection of what had been heard through the community engagement process.

Over 50 members of the public were present to give their comments during the public hearing. A majority were residents of Eldorado Springs who expressed opposition and concern for the proposal. People cited significant impacts related to increased state park visitation and overflow parking on the local Eldorado Springs Community, including traffic congestion and illegal parking on the private portion of Eldorado Springs Drive, impaired resident and emergency access, degraded public health and safety, and anticipated displacement of hikers due to the introduction of bikers on the proposed trail. Most of these stakeholders supported the No Action option or tabling the decision on a preferred alignment for a multi-use trail until the partner agencies complete further study on capacity-related challenges. Proponents of the trail commented that there are lots of ways to share trails, and allowing bikers will increase access for youth on trails and open space. Video archive of the public hearing is available at BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org/posac.

City of Boulder Open Space Board of Trustees Consideration

In response to the guidance provided by POSAC, a revised partner agency recommendation that reflected their amendments was presented to the Open Space Board of Trustees on Feb. 13, 2019, where the OSBT hosted a public hearing to consider the revised partner agency recommendation. The OSBT unanimously approved the motion included as **Attachment A**. In summary, the OSBT motion:

- Concurs with the staff recommendation for the north conceptual alignment (N1, N2, and N4) as the preferred alternative. However, the board does not view the proposed multi-use trail in isolation and will provide a final recommendation to Boulder City Council on the trail only after a subsequent planning effort is completed by the partner agencies with proposed solutions to address implementation challenges.
- Affirms support for continued collaboration among the partner agencies, visitor groups, and stakeholders—including the Eldorado Springs community—to develop strategies that mitigate the implementation challenges.
- Adds guidance on developing a comprehensive proposal to not only address the capacity-related issues—such as parking, transportation and safety—affecting the state park and greater Eldorado Springs community, but also address trail alignment related environmental impacts and the visitor experience including user conflicts on the trail.

Approximately 65 members of the public commented during the public hearing. Many had provided testimony at the POSAC hearing and shared comments which echoed much of what had been expressed throughout the public engagement process. A continued emphasis was on the need to address existing ECSP visitation and capacity-related challenges impacting the Eldorado Springs community. Several community members spoke in favor of the revised partner agency recommendation and supported continued collaboration among the partner agencies to address the existing issues.

Public Input

Public comments have been a valuable component of the feasibility study and decision-making process. Two community engagement windows were held during the planning process prior to consideration by the city and county open space boards.

During the initial and second public comment periods, the agencies received 475 and 670 comments respectively. The agencies received over 500 additional comments since the close of the second public engagement period. Some community members addressed their written comments separately to POSAC, OSBT, Boulder City Council and/or the Boulder County Commissioners. (The project team has worked to streamline these and remove duplicate comments as much as possible. Many community members also sent more than one message sharing their feedback with these boards. In general, if a message contained new feedback by a stakeholder who had already provided comments, their subsequent comments also are included as part of the public record of comments.)

There are multiple documents posted on the project webpage that present the comments received:

- [Compendium of Initial Public Comments](#) – Reflects feedback received during the initial public comment period that was open from Aug. 28 – Sept. 11, 2018. The initial public comment period helped inform the feasibility study analysis.
- [Summary and Responses to Initial Public Comments](#) – Highlights key results and common themes expressed by feedback received during the initial public comment period.
- [Online Questionnaire Summary of Responses](#) – Summarizes the online questionnaire that was created to gather feedback from community stakeholders on the preliminary partner agency recommendation. The questionnaire was open during the second public comment period from Nov. 28, 2018 – Dec. 9, 2018.
- [Summary of Online Questionnaire Responses](#) – Highlights key results from the online questionnaire.

- [Compendium of Comments Received by Written Correspondence](#) – Includes additional feedback on the preliminary agency recommendation received during the second public comment period.
- [Compendium of Comments Received Dec. 10, 2018 – Mar. 12, 2019](#) – Includes comments made after the second public comment period including comments sent to POSAC.

The partner agency recommendation was informed by feedback from the second public comment period. A majority of stakeholders who responded to the online questionnaire indicated support for the preliminary agency recommendation. Of significance, however, is that over 90% of Eldorado Springs residents did not support the preliminary partner agency recommendation. Additionally, regardless of their level of support for the trail, many respondents expressed that access, local traffic congestion, and parking impacts to the state park and greater Eldorado Springs community need to be addressed before planning, designing, and constructing a multi-use trail connection.

As detailed in the previous section, the public hearings at POSAC in January and at OSBT in February also provided the opportunity for the public to provide comments.

CPW visitor use management Plan

The issue of visitor capacity at Eldorado Canyon State Park is a major concern to CPW and residents of Eldorado Springs. Because of these concerns and the need to address increased visitation, CPW will initiate an expedited visitor management planning process in July 2019 with expected completion in late 2020. The plan will consider all uses of the park, including the proposed Eldo-Walker trail, and possible future conditions and trends. A critical first step will be to develop a public engagement plan that ensures the Eldorado Springs community and recreationalists, along with the adjacent public land managers, are represented. CPW envisions a robust public process with involvement from and collaboration among community stakeholders including the agency partner representatives from OSMP, BCPOS, and Boulder County Transportation, as well as the Eldorado Springs community, and a diverse set of state park recreationalists including climbers, mountain bikers, hikers, bird watchers, and picnickers. The planning process will allow stakeholders to gather and analyze all options and will include multiple opportunities for public input. Some possible strategies that are currently being used in other popular recreation destinations and that could be considered in the planning process, include

- Shuttle or bus services to limit vehicle traffic
- Infrastructure redesign and improvements
- Trail redesign and improvements
- Permit and reservation systems
- Limits on visitor type on certain days of the week

Some measures may need to be piloted prior to the completion of the planning process to address crowding in the park. In an effort to focus on the visitor use management plan and process, CPW requested in a March 1 letter that further consideration of the Eldo-Walker trail be tabled until after the visitor use management plan is complete. The letter is provided as **Attachment B**.

Other planning initiatives underway

Several other projects are in various stages of planning and development to alleviate existing issues within the park and Eldorado Springs. These include the following:

- ECSP Entry Station Upgrade: CPW has funded planning and design work to upgrade and improve the entry station, which will allow for a more efficient processing of visitors as they enter the park and will also provide a vehicle turn-around for times when the park is full or closed.
- Streamside Trail Extension: The park is in the early planning stages of examining an

extension of the Streamside Trail along the north bank of South Boulder Creek to reach the Rincon parking area near the Visitor Center. This trail, once designed and completed, will provide better trail connectivity and circulation through the Inner Canyon for all visitors, and will reduce pedestrian traffic on the road.

- Eldorado Springs Road Improvement Project: State Highway 170 is owned and operated by the Colorado Department of Transportation. It becomes a private road when it enters Eldorado Springs and the road transitions to a dirt surface. CPW has an easement for access to the state park as do residents to the west of the state park. Boulder County has been working with the park and other stakeholders to develop options in an effort to address ongoing transportation and parking issues along the private road through the Eldorado Springs townsite. A transportation improvement project initiated in 2012 has not yet gained support from the Artesian Company. The trail feasibility study and a special use permit request for modernization of Artesian Springs is bringing new attention and momentum toward implementing solutions.
- Funding for shoulders along SH170 is on the approved project list for the Transportation Sales Tax approved by the voters in 2001 and extended in 2007. The master planning effort for this project is scheduled to kick off in 2019. Implementation of shoulders will require additional funding from other project partners.
- At the direction of the Board, Transportation staff has conducted initial scoping of the cost and feasibility of implementing a shuttle connecting the state park/community with the City of Boulder. Depending on the shuttle frequency, period of service, and potential costs of parking, preliminary estimates range from \$10,000 - \$14,000 per weekend of service, or \$40,000 - \$64,000 per month of service.
- The Artesian Company has submitted a land use application to remodel and expand the uses of the historic pool/ballroom complex. The board has approved the permit with a number of conditions, including that a plan be developed that is acceptable to the county, the state park that implements road improvements similar to the 2012 plan and evaluates shuttle feasibility.

Staff discussion

The feasibility study findings, partner agency recommendation, and direction provided by both POSAC and OSBT all support continued collaboration on additional planning and community engagement to address capacity-related impacts on Eldorado Canyon State Park and the Eldorado Springs Community. Guidance by the city and county open space boards also suggests considering a north route for the preferred alignment, although no final determination on the construction of a trail or a specific alignment has been made.

On March 1, CPW recommended putting any decisions about a multi-use trail on hold until an overall visitor use management plan could be developed. CPW intends to further analyze the potential multi-use connection that would allow mountain biking along with other potential future uses of the park as part of this planning process and statement of work.

While a public hearing before the Boulder County Commissioners was initially anticipated for March, in response to public comments and recommendations from the advisory boards, the county commissioners will postpone scheduling a public hearing until after the planned visitor management plan for Eldorado Canyon State Park (ECSP) is developed by CPW.

The north alignment primarily traverses OSMP- and ECSP-owned and managed lands, with only several hundred feet of proposed trail on BCPOS land. Nevertheless, the three partner agencies continue to be aligned with gathering additional information that responds to the interests of all three land managers as well as the visiting public and adjacent community..

Local and state land management agencies, visitors, and Eldorado Springs residents have been experiencing capacity-related challenges such as congestion, parking, and crowding issues for decades. These current challenges to Eldorado Canyon have been a theme expressed by public comments throughout the planning process, and these issues were evaluated as part of the Eldorado Canyon State Park Interface analysis topic in the feasibility study.

As expected, the study found that a multi-use trail is likely to increase visitation to Eldorado Canyon State Park and has the potential to increase visitor conflicts and capacity issues. The partner agencies commit to continue working collaboratively and with stakeholders to develop the appropriate mitigation strategies to these challenges affecting the Eldorado Springs community. The involvement of Boulder County Transportation and Colorado Department of Transportation as agency partners during future planning and public engagement will be essential. BCPOS and OSMP staff will be engaged in other efforts and collaborations in addition to the ECSP visitor use management plan.

Next Steps

In order to better guide roles and responsibilities moving forward, BCPOS and Transportation staff will work with CPW and the City of Boulder to formalize an agreement among the partner agencies related to future planning and public engagement associated with the visitor use management plan and parallel initiatives. Staff anticipates that CPW will serve as the lead agency in this broad effort with support by Boulder County and the City of Boulder.

Staff envisions the county's primary role to be in pursuing transportation roadway improvements and travel demand strategies as part of a more comprehensive effort for managing visitation to the park. To that end, Transportation staff will continue to spearhead ongoing planning and negotiation in support of transportation-related improvements to Eldorado Springs Drive and a potential shuttle service in response to the proposed development of the Eldorado Artesian Springs site. To take advantage of current momentum, Boulder County also could host listening sessions with the Eldorado Springs community and other stakeholders in the coming months. Through dialog, Boulder County would assist the community with clarifying the long-standing park capacity-related impacts to the townsite and identifying Eldorado Springs community members to represent resident and property owner interests on their input into the planned visitor use management Plan process.

Staff recommends that as opportunities arise BCPOS and the Boulder County Transportation departments continue working in collaboration with OSMP and CPW to develop a comprehensive proposal for the Eldorado Canyon to Walker Ranch multi-use trail connection and capacity management. The future partner agency recommendation for board consideration would address the capacity-related issues affecting the state park and the Eldorado Springs community, potential environmental impacts of the trail alignment, and user conflicts and other impacts to the visitor experience.

DRAFT motion language from Feb. 13, 2019 regarding Eldo Walker:

A reminder that the minutes from this meeting, which include this motion language, are not final until the OSBT approves the Feb. 13, 2019 minutes at their Mar. 13, 2019 meeting.

Curt Brown moved that the Open Space Board of Trustees make the following statement regarding the Eldo/Walker trail study:

- 1) The Board does not view the proposed Eldo-Walker Trail in isolation. The Board is aware that, as part of the compromises considered as part of the West TSA in 2011, Council voted unanimously to pursue, among other things, an Eldo-Walker multi-use trail connection. This motion is intended to pursue that decision and the adopted West TSA Plan that recommended a feasibility study for such a connection. We recognize there are differences between the council motion and the West TSA Plan as adopted.
- 2) The Board concurs with the staff report recommendation that, between the South and North conceptual alignments, the North alignment (N1, N2, N4 [but see #4B]) is preferred.
- 3) The North conceptual alignment would effectuate a long-standing planning objective and would provide a quality mountain bike experience, a more sustainable trail, and important regional trail connectivity for which there are limited opportunities. The trail should also provide a quality hiker experience.
- 4) However, the proposed alignment faces significant challenges that affect its ultimate feasibility. The Board can only provide a final recommendation to City Council on the trail when a full Eldo-Walker Trail, Natural Resources, and Visitor Management Proposal (Proposal) has been developed by staff of the three agencies. It is the nature of the Eldo-Walker area that almost any aspect of that Proposal can affect the mission and resources of all three agencies and thus must be addressed jointly.

Staff should continue to work with Boulder County Parks and Open Space and the Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife in collaboration with all visitor groups and stakeholders, including the Eldorado Springs community, to propose solutions for:

- A. **Parking, Transportation, and Safety:** Visitation at Eldorado Canyon State Park (Park) has increased dramatically since the West TSA, creating significant problems both for the Park and the town of Eldorado Springs. These existing problems are not related to mountain bike visitation and need to be addressed regardless of whether a new trail is constructed. But, solutions should be proposed before bringing this additional use to the Park. The Board believes that the trail study can be a catalyst for attracting resources to address these long-standing and growing issues. Proposed solutions should avoid simply shifting parking problems to nearby trailheads. The proposal should also address issues of commercial use.
- B. **Environmental Impacts:** The final proposed alignment should closely consider sensitive resources in the OSMP West Mountain Parks HCA and minimize impacts upon them. This should examine ways to minimize the footprint and fragmentation of any new trail in the HCA.
- C. **User Conflicts on the Trail:** The Proposal should recognize that the existing North trail has been used by pedestrians and equestrians for many years. Protecting the experience of all users is important in this process. This proposal should evaluate temporal separation as a means to achieve that goal.
- D. **Previous TSA Commitments.** Absent a new TSA process, opening the Fowler Trail and the Goshawk Trail to provide bike access to the Park would overturn longstanding decisions made during the Eldorado Mountain-Dowdy Draw TSA process.

Tom Isaacson seconded. This motion passed unanimously.



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Northeast Regional Office
6060 Broadway
Denver, CO 80216
P 303.291.7227 | F 303.291.7114

March 1, 2019

Dan Burke, Interim Director
City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks
1777 Broadway
Boulder, CO 80302

Eric Lane, Director
Boulder County Parks and Open Space
5201 St. Vrain Road
Longmont, CO 80503

Dear Open Space Partners,

As we all know, the concept of a multi-use trail connection between the mountains to the plains on the Front Range, and specifically in the Boulder area, has been discussed for many years. The effort to evaluate a connection between Boulder County Walker Open Space and Eldorado Canyon State Park (the Eldo-Walker trail) is the latest of these on-going discussions. In 2013, Boulder County, the City of Boulder, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife entered into a partnership to study the feasibility of this particular trail connection, and in 2015, then Governor John Hickenlooper designated this trail connection as one of the 16 for 16 connections in his Colorado the Beautiful Initiative.

Three potential alternatives were examined in the feasibility study; a north route, a south route, and a no-action alternative. These three alternatives were evaluated using several different criteria such as impacts to natural resources, visitor safety, conflicts with other trail users, terrain, and construction concerns including the cost of construction. Based on these and other criteria, in the fall of 2018 the partners agreed that the north route was the preferred route of the three alternatives evaluated, and that it was feasible to build a trail from Walker Open Space to Eldorado Canyon State Park. However, there were no decisions regarding the advisability of building the trail connection.

In the background of the timeline between the beginning of the feasibility study in 2013 and its conclusion in 2018 was significant population growth and the concomitant increase in visitation and outdoor recreation along the Front Range on many public lands. Eldorado Canyon State Park experienced this firsthand with visitation at the park increasing from approximately 260,000 visitors in 2016 to over 520,000 visitors in 2018. Throughout this period of visitor growth, park operating budgets and staffing levels remained unchanged, with a permanent staff of 4 employees. Eldorado Canyon State Park has a total of 220 parking



spaces, so when those spaces are full, the park is at “capacity” and no more vehicles are allowed in until another vehicle leaves. This creates waiting lines at the park entrance station, frustrating visitors wanting to get into the park and angering residents of Eldorado Springs because of the increase in traffic through the town, park visitors parking in town and walking into the park, and concerns over safety from increased vehicular traffic.

During the public outreach process there were varying levels of support for or opposition to the proposed trail connection. Mountain biking groups were strongly in favor of the trail connection through Eldorado Canyon State Park while residents of the town of Eldorado Springs were strongly opposed to the trail, as were members of the climbing community. These opinions were reflected in the testimony at the January 2019, County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) meeting and the February, City Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) meeting. In surveys that were conducted during the process, over 90% of the residents of Eldorado Springs were in opposition to the proposed trail connection. Colorado Parks and Wildlife, in conjunction with Boulder County and the City of Boulder, conducted small group meetings with town residents to hear their concerns. Themes about the process being pre-decisional, adding another use to an already over-burdened park, changing the park experience, negative impacts to town residents, and concerns about crowding and safety - both in the park and the town, were expressed.

The issue of visitor capacity at Eldorado Canyon State Park is of major concern to Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the visitors of the park, and the residents of Eldorado Springs. Because of these concerns and the need to come up with a plan for dealing with increased visitation, Colorado Parks and Wildlife intends to initiate an expedited visitor-management planning process in the summer of 2019. We believe this planning process is imperative whether or not the Eldo-Walker trail ultimately gets approved and constructed. The proposed timeline for the planning process is that the plan would be initiated in July of 2019 with a goal of completing the plan in late 2020. The plan would consider all uses of the park including the proposed Eldo-Walker trail, and possible future conditions and trends. Recommended strategies would be developed for dealing with capacity issues. Based on those recommendations, Colorado Parks and Wildlife would prioritize the strategies and develop a funding and implementation plan and timeline. There may be some measures that will need to be piloted prior to the completion of the planning process to address crowding in the park such as a reservation-only system for all users.

No planning process would be successful without a robust public involvement component, and we intend to create a task force to advise us. We would invite both Boulder County and the City of Boulder to be involved as well as constituent representatives from Eldorado Springs and from the various user groups such as climbers, mountain bikers, hikers, bird watchers, and minority communities. This process is consistent with recommendations from both the POSAC and OSBT boards.

Because of the need to complete our planning process and develop strategies to deal with overall park capacity issues, Colorado Parks and Wildlife prefers to table further discussion of the Eldo-Walker trail for the time being. We realize that this is a change of direction from the County and City processes, but we feel that this is a prudent and responsible approach. Eldorado Canyon State Park is a treasure to the people of Colorado and its visitors, and is unique among our 41 state parks, and we cannot take the increased visitor impacts lightly. This issue requires a measured and thoughtful approach, and we feel that this planning process allows for that. We value our partnership with both Boulder County and the City of Boulder and look forward to working with you throughout this planning process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Leslie".

Mark Leslie
Northeast Regional Manager